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ABSTRACT

The earliest evidence of correspondence (home) study in the United States dates from March 1728, and it has been formally recognized in this country since 1883. The effectiveness of correspondence study has been recognized by a wide variety of organizations and regulatory bodies including state education regulatory agencies, the U.S. Department of Education, employers, American business and industry, high schools, universities and colleges, licensing boards, the Veterans Administration, the armed forces, unions and trade associations, religious institutions, and charitable organizations. Standards for correspondence study are developed and monitored by the National Home Study Council, the National University Continuing Education Association, and the Program on Non-collegiate Sponsored Instruction. Formal U.S. government recognition of home study came in 1936 when the Federal Trade Commission adopted a series of trade practice rules formulated by the National Home Study Council. Numerous effectiveness studies have confirmed the benefits and favorable outcomes of correspondence study. Both high school and college degree programs are available on a correspondence study basis, as are vocational, military, and religious training. Home or correspondence study has been an especially valuable option for disabled persons. Recent advances in correspondence study include telephonic teaching and testing, education television, videocassette and videodisks lessons, and computer-based training. (MN)

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**Leonard Valore
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Grover E. Diehl**



April 1987

**NATIONAL HOME STUDY COUNCIL
1601 Eighteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009**

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The National Home Study Council, a voluntary association of accredited home study schools, was founded in 1926 to promote sound educational standards and ethical business practices within the home study field. The independent NHSC Accrediting Commission is listed by the United States Department of Education as a "nationally recognized accrediting agency." The Accrediting Commission is also a recognized member of the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA).

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THE EFFECTIVENESS AND ACCEPTANCE OF HOME STUDY

Originally conceived as a "substitute" form of education, instruction by mail has developed into a "preferred alternative" for millions of people who seek education and training. How has home study--or correspondence instruction--come to deserve "its place" in the educational scheme? We shall look at the results and review measures of the effectiveness of home study. And, we shall recount events that have established instruction by correspondence as a recognized and effective method of education and training.

HOME STUDY FORMALLY RECOGNIZED IN THE UNITED STATES SINCE 1883

Correspondence education has a rich and fascinating history of achievements that began when educational opportunity was a rare commodity. The earliest evidence of home study instruction is in the form of an advertisement in the *Boston Gazette*, dated March 25, 1728. (See Figure 1.)

THE BOSTON GAZETTE

March 20, 1728

Caleb Philipps, Teacher of the New Method of Short Hand, is remov'd opposite to the north door of the Town House in King-street. As this way of Joyning 3, 4, 5 &c. words in one in every Sentence by the Moods, Tenses, Persons, and Verb. do's not in the least spoil the Long Hand, so it is not anything like the Marks for Sentences in the Printed Character Books being all wrote according to the Letter, and a few Plain and Easy Rules.

N.B. Any Persons in the Country desirous to Learn this Art, may by having the several Lessons sent Weekly to them, be as perfectly instructed as those that live in Boston.

Courtesy of Rex Ballenberg, American School.

Figure 1. This early American advertisement advised readers to "note well" (n.b.) that shorthand could be perfectly instructed by home study.

The formal recognition of correspondence study in America goes back to 1883 when the State of New York authorized the Chautauqua Institute to award degrees via home study. Throughout the century which followed, significant steps were taken in advancing home study as a primary and secondary source of education:

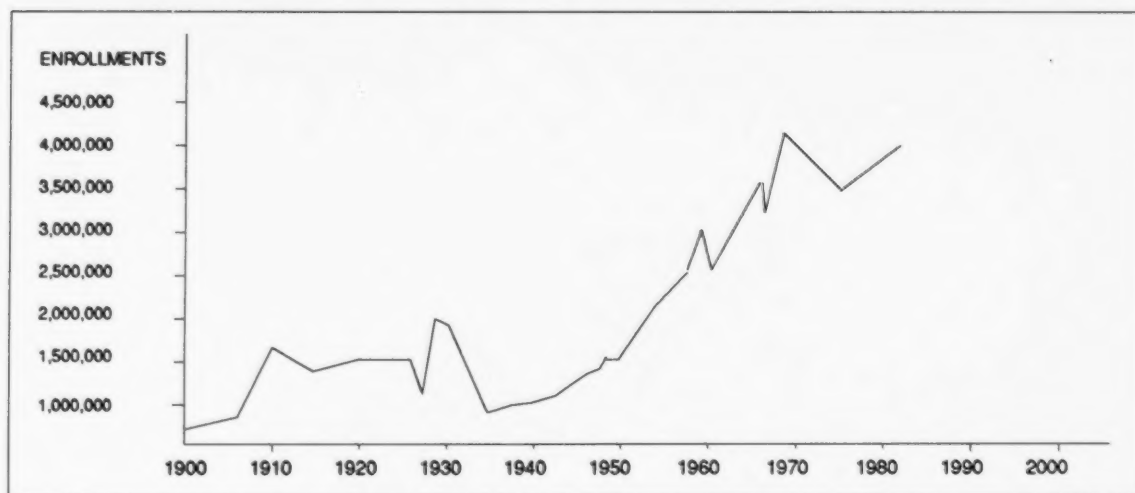
- a primary source when the complete education or most of the training program is provided through home study;
- a secondary source when a minor portion of an educational program is conducted by the correspondence method, with the remainder requiring hands-on and/or classroom instruction.

Today, home study serves as a primary source, as well as a secondary source, in providing accredited and other home study programs in a wide variety of educational endeavors. These include all grades of elementary school, high school diploma programs, and college degrees. Also included are many vocational entry or upgrading programs, avocational programs, governmental and military training, license preparation programs, and many other areas of training or education.

These home study programs are being offered today by colleges and universities, major corporations, small business enterprises, educational agencies of government or other governmental entities, branches of the armed services, trade associations, religious institutions, political entities, private entrepreneurs, and charitable non-profit organizations.

CORRESPONDENCE INSTRUCTION IS POPULAR AND EFFECTIVE

The popularity of home study has been demonstrated, repeatedly. Since its beginning, home study has always found a responsive audience. In the past one hundred years, home study enrollments in the United States have grown from a few hundred per year to well over four million annually.¹ Since 1900, over 70 million Americans have studied by mail, including Franklin D.



Courtesy National Home Study Council

Figure 2. Enrollments in U.S. Correspondence Courses 1900-1985

¹This information is courtesy of National Home Study Council.

Roosevelt, Walter P. Chrysler, Walter Cronkite, Barry Goldwater, Charles Schulz, and many other distinguished Americans.

On the question of effectiveness, a multitude of individual testimonials have been offered over the years, attesting to the benefits of home study. Beyond these claims, however, studies have been conducted to measure effectiveness. Whenever home study has been examined for effectiveness, it has passed the test. All of the research published since 1920 has indicated that correspondence students perform just as well as, and in most cases better than, their classroom counterparts.

Thus, home study has become recognized as "effective" when essential education and business standards are met. The wide variety of organizations and regulatory bodies which recognize and accept correspondence study include:

- **State education regulatory agencies** - which authorize or approve each home study school operating within state boundaries;
- **The U.S. Department of Education** - which approves home study programs to qualify for participation in federal programs;
- **Employers everywhere** - who provide opportunities for correspondence school graduates as skillful, knowledgeable, competent employees;
- **American business and industry** - which continually adopt quality home study programs to train employees;
- **High schools, colleges and universities** - which accept home study course credits toward diplomas and degrees, as well as offering their own correspondence courses;
- **Licensing boards** - which determine that home study credits meet training prerequisites for taking certification examinations;
- **The Veterans Administration** - which authorizes correspondence programs to qualify for G.I. Bill of Rights tuition reimbursement;
- **The Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard** - which have established their own home study training vehicles through which their personnel may obtain credits for education obtained within and outside the armed services;
- **Unions and Trade Associations** - which continually employ correspondence programs in assisting members to become more skillful and knowledgeable;
- **Religious institutions** - which use distance education to enlighten their memberships and to train new leaders;
- **Charitable organizations** - which employ home study to help the handicapped; and
- **Accrediting and/or evaluative organizations** - which define effectiveness criteria for schools and educational programs and measure how well established standards are being met.

STANDARDS IN HOME STUDY

There are today three major organizations in the United States which evaluate and/or

accredit home study schools and their coursework. These are:

1. **NHSC** - The National Home Study Council, with its independent Accrediting Commission. The NHSC, founded in 1926, is a voluntary, nationally recognized organization which may be joined by home study schools which meet prescribed standards. For membership, a school's course work and their operations and business practices must meet standards of the NHSC Accrediting Commission. NHSC member schools offer course work in 283 listed categories.

2. **NUCEA** - The National University Continuing Education Association, which is made up almost wholly of divisions or departments of regionally accredited colleges and universities. The NUCEA catalog lists over 12,000 high school, college undergraduate and graduate, and non-credit courses offered by 72 accredited colleges and universities.

3. **PONSI** - The Program On Non-collegiate Sponsored Instruction, which operates as a division of the American Council on Education. PONSI administers independent evaluations of home study and other education techniques for equivalent college credit. Today, over 1500 colleges and universities accept PONSI evaluations for transfer credit toward their degrees.

GOVERNMENT RECOGNITION

To pick up the trail of "recognition for home study course work," we need to go back to Chautauqua Institute, authorized by the State of New York in 1883 to award home study degrees. William Rainey Harper's courses for Chautauquans enrolled as many as 60,000 students at one time, from as many as 10,000 communities. Harper became president of the University of Chicago in 1898, bringing with him what William Lighty called, "...his long distance teaching system..." to the University.²

By the turn of the century, various state-chartered institutions and land grant universities had launched correspondence study departments. In 1920, with the generous help of International Correspondence Schools, one of the earliest of the military correspondence schools, the U.S. Marine Corps Institute, was established.

Today, the single largest provider of correspondence study instruction is the U.S. Government; its military and non-military home study institutes enroll over two million students annually. The institutes include those operated by the military as well as the home study institutes of various government agencies. These include the Office of Personnel Management and Department of Defense, the National Defense University and the Defense Security Institute.

Formal government recognition of private home study came in 1936, when the U.S. Federal Trade Commission adopted a series of Trade Practice Rules formulated by the National Home Study Council. Since 1936, federal reliance on the work of the National Home Study Council has steadily increased.

Following World War II, home study institutions were included in the new G.I. Bill of Rights. Subsequent G.I. bills have given specific recognition to NHSC accredited schools. Under the Vietnam-era bill, over 1.1 million (20 percent of the total) veterans elected to use their education benefits for a home study program.

The U.S. Commissioner of Education formally recognized the Accrediting Commission of the National Home Study Council in 1959 as a national accreditation agency. This recognition was reaffirmed in 1970, 1974, and 1981. In 1985, the NHSC Accrediting Commission's scope of recognition was expanded to include academic degree programs by home study from the associate

² Michael G. Moore, "Purpose and Practice of Home Study in the 1990's," Unpublished Paper, NHSC Correspondence Education Workshop, October, 1986.

through the masters degree level.

Federal government reliance on and recognition of correspondence study takes many forms: for employment and hiring purposes in the civil service system; home study high school diploma recognition for armed forces enlistment; tuition reimbursement programs, such as the Department of Navy; and, eligibility under various government student tuition aid programs, such as the Guaranteed Student Loan Program.

State governments also give extensive formal recognition through specific legislative acts to home study institutions. Presently, over 30 states award some form of recognition to NHSC accredited schools, ranging from complete exemption from state laws to acceptance of NHSC refund policies. North Dakota requires all home study schools to be NHSC accredited as a condition of state licensure. California exempts NHSC institutions from its Student Tuition Recovery Fund. Home study schools are the only category of institutions to receive such an exemption.

In addition, some states such as Alaska, Massachusetts and North Dakota operate their own state-funded correspondence study departments for citizens of their states.

The formal recognition of correspondence instruction by state and federal governments is based largely on three points: government sponsorship of correspondence programs; home study students at accredited schools are eligible for federal student aid; and, recognition of NHSC accreditation in state and federal laws for licensure or tuition reimbursement. The recognition of home study education by governments has increased dramatically, due in large measure to the effectiveness of the accreditation program of the National Home Study Council over the past 30 years.

"EFFECTIVENESS" STUDIES

In 1976, Charles B. Marshall published a monograph, *The Effectiveness of Home Study*.³ He cited the following classic major university studies, which compared outcomes of home study instruction to results in equivalent resident programs:

Dr. Robert E. Crump, in a Columbia University dissertation, "Correspondence and Class Extension in Oklahoma," measured the comparative performance of extension students.⁴ In Dr. Crump's experiment, resident and correspondence students were given the same battery of final examinations. The results of this research indicated that differences between the instructional methods were insignificant as far as ultimate attainment was concerned.

Dr. Dale W. Dysinger, in an article titled "Performance of Correspondence Study Students,"⁵ revealed the results of a detailed experiment concerning the study habits and progress of a small but very tightly controlled group. A University of Wisconsin instructor taught an introductory psychology course. He then prepared an equivalent correspondence course. The 41 correspondence students completed the program with attainment which equaled or surpassed the achievements of 167 classroom students. The study concluded that the results of the correspondence course were at least the equivalent of residence instruction.

³ C. B. Marshall, *The Effectiveness of Home Study* (Chicago: La Salle Extension University, 1976).

⁴ R. E. Crump, *Correspondence and Class Extension in Oklahoma* (New York: Columbia University, 1928).

⁵ D. W. Dysinger, "Performance of Correspondence Study Students," *Journal of Higher Education*, 28, (1957), pp. 387-388.

In another inquiry, "A Study of the Relative Ability and Achievement of Class Extension, Correspondence and Resident Students at the University of Kentucky," Dr. Arthur Larson reported that after extensive analysis his results showed that correspondence students achieve levels which compared favorably to resident students, as demonstrated on reading tests, vocabulary tests, and shown in written appraisals of students by the faculty. The Larson study also determined that "...correspondence students spend more time in subject preparation than do resident students."⁶

Writing in the *Journal of Educational Research*, Dr. Emil L. Larson corroborated these findings in his article, "The Comparative Quality of Work Done by Students in Residence and Correspondence Work." He showed that home study students attained as high a standard of performance as resident students attained based on the results of a standard test given to 56 University of Arizona students who had taken both residence and correspondence courses.⁷ Professor Larson theorized that the superior achievement of the correspondence students might have resulted from their having selected subjects in which they had a special interest and individual aptitude.

In another survey, "The Effectiveness of Correspondence Study"⁸ also reported the results of a comparison of correspondence and classroom students. It showed higher academic achievement performance for the correspondence group. Dr. Feig, the researcher, hypothesized that the superiority of the extension students might have been the result of their greater maturity and personal discipline.

Results of another examination of the home study method, "Completion Rates and Achievements of Students in Supervised Correspondence Study,"⁹ demonstrated that correspondence course achievements equaled resident school attainment. Dr. Gayle B. Childs, University of Nebraska, compared a group of mathematics students who had been exposed to home study with a group who hadn't.¹⁰ He concluded that "...pupils who have studied mathematics by correspondence in high school are, on the average, likely to succeed somewhat better than those students of comparable ability who have not had this experience." Professor Childs asserted that the development of correspondence study "...has made possible, for the first time in our history, the actual realization of the goal of universally available secondary education. Its growth, its great diversity, its wide acceptance, its healthy vitality, and its continuing proliferation into new areas and new fields attest to the fact that it fills its role superbly."¹¹

⁶ Arthur Larson, "A Study of the Relative Ability and Achievement of Class Extension Correspondence and Resident Students at the University of Kentucky," Thesis. University of Kentucky 1929). Note: This M.A. thesis is available through Educational Resources Information Center, U.S. Office of Education.

⁷ Emil L. Larson, "The Comparative Quality of Work Done by Students in Residence and Correspondence Work," *Journal of Educational Research*, 25 (1936), pp. 105-109.

⁸ Chester A. Feig, "The Effectiveness of Correspondence Study," Thesis. Pennsylvania State University (1932).

⁹ Donald Haberman, "Completion Rates and Achievements of Students in Supervised Correspondence Study," Thesis. University of Nebraska (1954), p. 181.

¹⁰ G. B. Childs, "Success in Initial University Mathematics Courses of Students with Correspondence and Non-Correspondence Backgrounds," *Journal of Educational Research*, 7 (1956), pp. 607-12.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, "Correspondence Study in the Total Program of Education at the High School Level," *University of Nebraska News*, National University Extension Association Supplement XII (1957).

More recently, the National Home Study Council published the results of a survey in a report, "Accredited Home Study Degrees - Graduates and Employers Evaluate Their Worth."¹² This 1983 survey of graduates from NHSC accredited degree programs revealed that 97 percent of the respondents felt that their degree programs provided the knowledge, skills and education they were seeking. Over 90 percent of the graduates felt they had--or will have--the job or salary increase they were seeking as a result of earning their degree.

A separate follow-up survey was sent to (employment) supervisors named by the graduates. All of the responding supervisors indicated that their home study degree graduate employees:

1. compared favorably in knowledge to their resident school degree employees; and
2. performed better on the job as a result of earning the degree.

Additional measures of home study "effectiveness" have also been reported:

Laverenz found that students taking correspondence courses from nine Midwestern and Southeastern universities were generally satisfied with teacher-student communication, rated their courses very good for academic quality, and were willing to take other independent study courses.¹³

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service provides a program in parenthood education which includes mini-courses, correspondence education, and a newsletter. The program was associated with a decrease in teenage pregnancy in 11 of the 13 counties in which the program operated.¹⁴

In most respects, home study and correspondence education have compared favorably with other methods of providing adult and continuing education. Following are a variety of studies indicating that this is so.

In an Australian program relying heavily on correspondence instruction, Briody reported improved reading ability in six of 12 children with learning difficulties. Reactions to the program were positive, and it was recommended that increased teacher-parent-student contact be encouraged.¹⁵

Because of its geographic spread, Australia has long made use of correspondence study, especially since the end of World War II. The Australian government has established a formal system of correspondence education for primary and secondary school levels. Over a period of years, the Australian educational authorities have carefully measured the progress of the students enrolled in home study as opposed to the progress of institutional

¹² *Accredited Home Study Degrees, Graduates and Employers Evaluate Their Worth* (Washington, D.C.: National Home Study Council, 1983).

¹³ T. R. Laverenz, *Student Perceptions of Instructional Quality of Correspondence Study Courses: Report of a Nine School Comparative Study* (Lexington: University of Kentucky, 1979).

¹⁴ I. K. Lee and M. W. Smith, "Extension Helps Reduce Pregnancy Rate," *Illinois Teacher of Home Economics*, 26, No. 4 (1983) pp. 136-7.

¹⁵ P. M. Briody, "The Mobile Remedial Unit in South-West Queensland," *Priority Country Area Program Evaluation Series: Report Number 16* (Canberra: Australian Schools Commission, 1980).

resident students. The official report stated, "...A comparison of the results in the same examinations of correspondence students and resident students at the University of New England (Australia) over the first decade of correspondence teaching showed that there was no difference between the pass rates of external and internal students."¹⁶

In a control group experiment, Dyson found improved post-test performance for a group of 35 elementary school students receiving remedial reading instruction via correspondence.¹⁷

Parent-infant preschool programs for deaf children have been effective, especially when student density did not support a resident instructor.¹⁸ B'nai B'rith has published a list of home study opportunities for the home-bound.¹⁹

Montgomerie reported that no significant differences were found between correspondence, traditional, and computer-based distance instruction, although completion rates were higher for the last than for the first two. Generally, however, correspondence students did better than traditional students on post-tests.²⁰

In a limited study, Walsh et. al. could not determine that summer at-home remedial reading instruction resulted in measurable improvement in children's reading ability. On the positive side, however, the parents were highly enthusiastic and desired the program's continuation.²¹

HIGH SCHOOL BY HOME STUDY

The correspondence instruction method has been successfully utilized in providing high school course work for many years. These offerings have been made by a variety of institutions.

Among NHSC member schools, International Correspondence Schools (founded in 1891) and American School (founded in 1897) offer complete high school diploma programs. A third, Home Study International (founded 1909), offers a high school diploma program (as well as elementary school and college-level courses) with inclusion of religious courses. More recent NHSC members include Cambridge Academy, Citizens' High School, Pathfinder High School of Independent Study and the Learning and Evaluation Center, a home study "summer school." These seven NHSC member schools offer complete high school diploma programs, or subjects designed specifically to meet diploma requirements. Courses offered by many other NHSC member schools have also been used to meet local high school graduation requirements.

¹⁶ "Education by Correspondence in Australia," (Sydney: Commonwealth Office of Education, 1963), *Office Bulletin No. 28*.

¹⁷ M. Dyson, "Teaching Reading by Correspondence to Children with Reading Defects," (April, 1980).

¹⁸ E. L. Lowell, "Parent-Infant Programs for Preschool Deaf Children: The Example of John Tracy Clinic," *Volta Review (The Families of Hearing Impaired Children)*, 81, No. 5 (1979), pp. 323-9.

¹⁹ *Careers for the Homebound. Home Study Opportunities* (Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Career and Counseling Services and The President's Committee on the Employment of the Handicapped, n.d.).

²⁰ T. C. Montgomerie, *Telidon Distance Education Field Trial. Alberta Correspondence School. Mechanics 12, Telidon Project Evaluation* (Edmonton: Planning and Research Branch, Alberta Department of Education, 1982).

²¹ D. J. Welsh, et. al., "Title I Parents as Compensatory Reading Instructors: Is There No Place Like Home?" (Los Angeles: American Educational Research Assn. (1981) Publication No. 80.58.

THE HOME STUDY PROCESS

1. Enrollment application completed at home, then submitted by mail.
2. Acceptance of enrollment at school.
3. Lesson materials sent to enrollee.
4. Student completes lessons at own pace, according to directions provided.
5. Student receives individual assistance whenever necessary via contact with school, and additional instructional materials are sent to the student as required.
6. Examinations or projects are completed at home and mailed to the school.
7. Exams graded and recorded at school.
8. Grades and examinations returned to student.
9. Student receives credit for work completed; progress reports are given.
10. Upon completion, student receives
 - a diploma or certificate of completion under authority of state department of education, or
 - qualifying credit to enter resident, "hands-on" training sessions.

Figure 3. The Home Study Process involves continuous contact between the student and learning center.

High school programs and course work are also offered by major colleges and universities; and by state governments, through their departments of education.

In 1984, Feasley determined that nearly half of the 73 NUCEA Independent Study member institutions offer correspondence high school programs.²² Notable among these are Brigham Young University, University of California, Indiana University, University of Missouri, and University of Nebraska.

States which have established complete Secondary Correspondence Schools include Alaska and North Dakota.

Additionally, correspondence courses have been used frequently to meet special needs. Barker and Peterson surveyed 319 small, rural high schools and found that 25 percent of the counselors frequently recommended correspondence courses.²³ A similar conclusion was drawn by Nimnicht and Partridge in a smaller study.²⁴ Finally, *Changing Times* magazine concluded that the increasing flexibility of curricula created a natural environment for the pursuit of home study programs.²⁵

Meeting requirements for graduation found in the public high schools has frequently been a serious problem for migrant students and greatly diminished their chances for high school graduation. California developed the Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS), which provided

²² Charles E. Feasley, *Independent Study in 1983: A Research Report of the NUCEA Independent Study Division* (Stillwater: Independent Study Division, NUCEA, Oklahoma State University, 1984).

²³ B. O. Barker and P. D. Peterson, *A Research Report of Small High Schools in the United States in Regard to Curricular Offerings, Micro-Computer Usage and Correspondence Courses* (Provo: Division of Continuing Education, Brigham Young University, 1984).

²⁴ Glen P. Nimnicht and A. R. Partridge, *Small Schools Can Be Good Schools* (Greeley: Educational Planning Service, Colorado State College, n.d.).

²⁵ "Use Your Mailbox to Go Back to School," *Changing Times*, 37, No. 9 (1983) pp. 67-71.

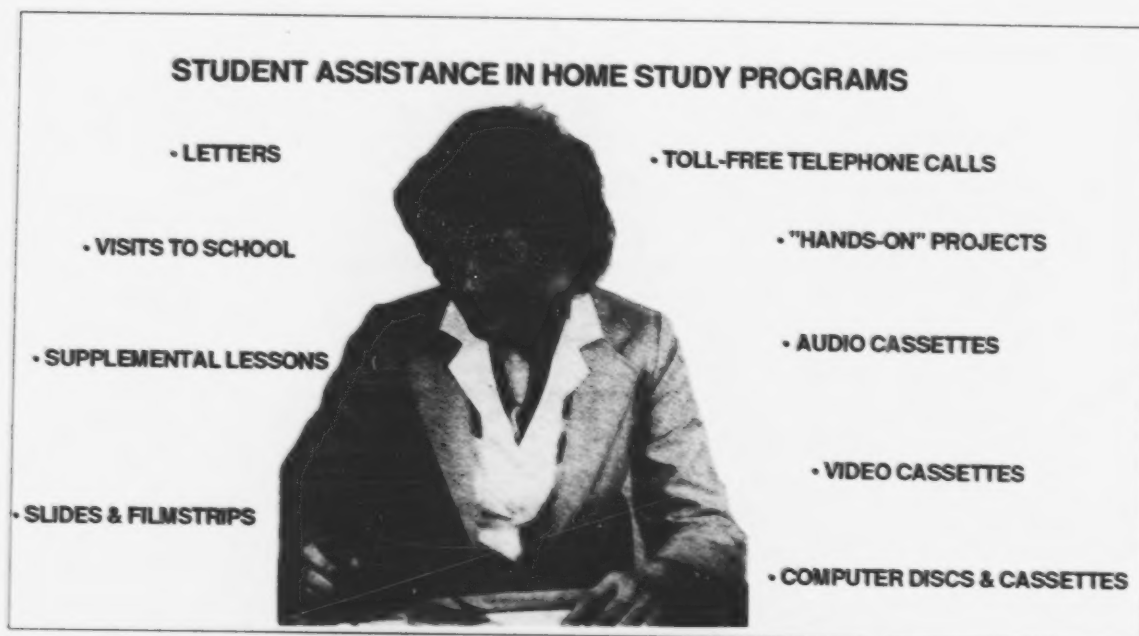


Figure 4. Home study students receive assistance in many ways.

correspondence study keyed to graduation requirements. Subsequent evaluation demonstrated that the program was functioning effectively.²⁶ PASS was also a feature of Oregon's secondary education program for migrant students.²⁷

Using correspondence study to expand the education of migrant students generalizes into more traditional areas, both to enrich existing school curricula and to avoid expensive consolidation. Since the single student is the basic unit of correspondence instruction, the method is considerably more flexible than when the unit is an entire classroom. For example, Liberty High School in Washington State has used purchased correspondence courses for curriculum enrichment and as an inducement to improve student performance. Not only have these purposes been met, but the program has fostered more positive student attitudes and improved attendance.²⁸

Beyond this, McAfee, writing in *School Management*, argued that creative use of correspondence courses offered a viable alternative to district consolidation, and that home study was an educationally sound and economically feasible method of increasing student opportunities for both academic and vocational training.²⁹ Correspondence study has been demonstrated to be a

²⁶ *The Parlier Report: California High School Graduation Requirements Affecting Migrant Students* (Sacramento: Parlier Unified School District, the California State Dept. of Education, and Cybernetic Learning Systems, 1979), and J. E. Foshee, *Parlier High School P.A.S.S. Program (Portable Assisted Study Sequence, Year-End Report, 1980-81)* (Dinuba: Parlier Unified School District and Quantum Research and Evaluation, 1981).

²⁷ R. C. Bardelas, *A Manual on Secondary Education Programs for Migrant Students* (Salem: Compensatory Education Section, Oregon State Dept. of Education, 1980).

²⁸ G. Wagoner, *Expanding the Small High School Curriculum through Correspondence and Expanding Vocational Education through Correspondence: A Combined Report on Dual Projects begun June 1977 and Continuing to Date*. Revised. (Spangle: Liberty School District, State of Washington, 1983).

²⁹ D. T. McAfee, "Correspondence Courses May Offer Some Answers," *School Management*, 17, No. 8 (1973) p. 34.

more popular learning medium than other alternatives such as commercial television, radio or newspaper.³⁰

HOME STUDY DEGREE PROGRAMS

As noted earlier, formal recognition of home study in the United States began when the State of New York approved a degree program by correspondence, before the turn of the century. A common practice since then, as far as recognized and accredited degree programs are concerned, has been the acceptance of home study credits toward residential degree programs.

The 1976 Marshall Report summarized current practice:

Today, many American colleges and universities will accept up to 30 semester hours of correspondence credit toward a degree.³¹ The acceptance of home study, therefore, has been demonstrated in several ways:

- by a large number of professional academic studies;
- by the use of correspondence courses by business, labor and government organizations;
- by new enabling legislation in such states as California, Illinois and Pennsylvania, making it possible to offer college degrees through home study; and
- by an expansion of the correspondence courses offered by the National University Continuing Education Association, as well as by a substantial increase in the membership of that group.³²

Complete degree programs offered by correspondence instruction and other external modes have become more commonplace since the Marshall study. Sullivan's *Guide To External Degree Programs In The United States*, published in 1983, reveals that 100 accredited institutions were offering degrees in 103 major fields of study.³³ These institutions are accredited by one of six regional accrediting associations or by NHSC.

A total of 61 of these institutions have degree programs with no requirement for on-campus attendance. The complete degrees, therefore, can be earned via correspondence instruction or by correspondence instruction coupled with other external modes. Most of the remaining programs require from two days to four weeks of on-campus attendance for students earning a degree.

The external degrees offered by these institutions are predominantly bachelor's degrees, over 30 associate degrees, nine master's degree programs, and one regionally accredited doctoral program. Though 80 percent of these programs had been operational less than 10 years, and one-third of them had been operating for less than five years, it was estimated that close to 100,000 degrees had been conferred by the time Sullivan's *Guide* was published.

³⁰ L. G. Elliott, *Summary of Non-Traditional Instructional Activities in Missouri: 1977-78. Research and Planning Series Report 79-2* (Jefferson City: Missouri State Department of Education, 1979).

³¹ Samuel Baskin, "Off-Campus Ways of Learning: Correspondence Study," *National Home Study Council News Supplement* (Washington D.C.: National Home Study Council, 1974).

³² Charles B. Marshall, *The Effectiveness of Home Study*.

³³ Eugene Sullivan, *Guide to External Degree Programs in the United States* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company and American Council on Education, 1983).

Some of the more active institutions today, in offering external degree programs, are the University of Maryland, Thomas A. Edison State College, and Indiana University's Division of Extended Studies. Each of these institutions has conferred more than 2500 associate and bachelor's degrees, all or substantial parts of which may be completed by correspondence instruction.

National Home Study Council member schools are the most recently accredited institutions to offer degree programs by home study. Currently, eight NHSC schools offer such programs.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BY CORRESPONDENCE

Each year millions of people, worldwide, elect home study to train for a new career or to upgrade themselves in their vocations.

NHSC member schools offer a wide array of courses designed for vocational entry or upgrading. More prominent entries include recognized course work in business education, communications, electronics, engineering technology, mechanical repair, travel and tourism, and truck driving. Resident instruction is included in programs when "hands-on" experience is deemed necessary.

Many businesses and industries also have selected correspondence study as a mode for training employees for many years. Today, over 200 of the *Fortune 500* American businesses use correspondence course work to train employees.³⁴

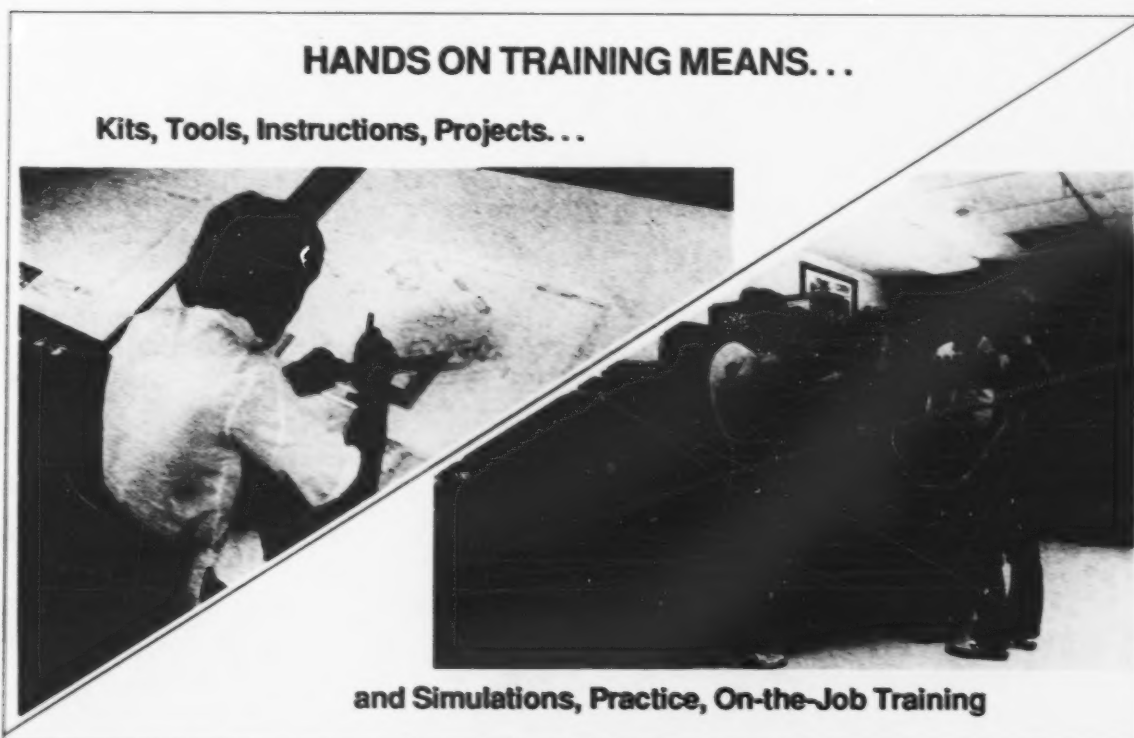


Figure 5. Training methods include the principle that "practice makes perfect."

³⁴ International Correspondence Schools, Scranton.

In 1952, International Correspondence Schools, alone, participated in the training programs of over 3,200 organizations, principally in the United States and Canada.³⁵

Perhaps the highest measure of "effectiveness of home study," therefore, has been the use of correspondence courses in vocational education and training, in a vast array of occupations.

Home study courses are also used today for vocational education by businesses, trade associations and unions. Often, the training is provided by contractual arrangement with an existing home study school. Over 40 trade associations, however, sponsor correspondence study departments or operate their own correspondence schools. These include:

American Medical Record Association;
Diamond Council of America;
Educational Institute of the American Hotel and Motel Association;
Farmland Industries;
Gemological Institute of America;
National Safety Council; and
NHAW Home Study Institute, a division of North American Heating and Air Conditioning Wholesalers Association.

All of these schools are accredited members of the National Home Study Council.

Home study course work is accepted by state licensing boards toward certification in the fields of accounting, real estate, insurance, surveying and engineering--among others.

Another important application of home study vocational education is in the area of Vocational Rehabilitation. Under various state and private rehabilitation agency programs, employees who have been injured and must select a new vocation often choose home study courses as the training vehicle.

HOME STUDY GRADUATES ARE EMPLOYED IN MANY FIELDS

MEDICAL OFFICE MANAGEMENT	WELDER	PARA-LEGAL
SECRETARY	CHILD CARE	GEMOLOGIST
BROADCASTER		
ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN	VETERINARY ASSISTANT	MANAGER
TV/VCR REPAIR	TRUCK DRIVER	GUN REPAIR
GOURMET COOK		
ELECTRICIAN	MICRO COMPUTER REPAIR	ARTIST
CATERER		
DRAFTSMAN	TRAVEL AGENT	AUTO MECHANIC
WRITER		
INTERIOR DECORATOR	HOTEL/MOTEL MANAGER	

Figure 6. Vocations and career opportunities are open to persons of all ages in a wide variety of fields.

³⁵ National Home Study Council records.

HOME STUDY IN THE GOVERNMENT AND ARMED FORCES

Government and military agencies sponsor an amazing variety of home study programs. The Air Force Extension Course Institute, for example, offered over 350 courses in professional military education and career development in 1984 and processed about 350,000 enrollments. The Marine Corps Institute and the U.S. Army Institute for Professional Development are also extremely large and offer a wide variety of courses. The Navy and Coast Guard have similar programs on a slightly smaller scale. Because these are such large programs with highly similar interests, the military services hold a yearly conference, with Interservice Correspondence Exchange, during which they share experiences and develop projects of mutual interest.

In the case of the Marine Corps, the Army, the Air Force, the Reserves and the National Guard, certain of the correspondence courses are required at specified levels for meeting promotional requirements.

Other federal agencies providing home study include the Federal Emergency Management Administration, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Office of Personnel Management. The home study courses administered by federal agencies have included pest management and environmental quality, wastewater management, management and supervision, citizenship for naturalization purposes, and, of course, the full range of occupational specialties found in the military services.

RELIGIOUS HOME STUDY SCHOOLS

Each year, hundreds of thousands of home study course enrollments are recorded worldwide by religious schools which are accredited members of the National Home Study Council. The oldest, Home Study International (founded in 1909), offers course work for kindergarten, elementary grades, junior high, high school diploma program, college and adult education. The largest, International Correspondence Institute (founded in 1967) offers (college) degree and non-degree courses in Bible studies, evangelism, and theological studies. Newest on the scene is the Catholic Home Study Institute (founded in 1983 and accredited in 1985), which offers course work in Roman Catholic Doctrine, history, and a variety of religious topics. Berean College and Seminary Extension Independent Study Institute are also NHSC accredited and offer courses and programs for their memberships and for religious leadership.

Burgeoning activity by these religiously based schools attests to the fact that a number of religions recognize and continue to use correspondence instruction as an important part of their missions.

HOME STUDY FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Since the beginning, accredited home study schools have extended training to the handicapped, providing educational opportunities that might otherwise not have been available to them.

Many NHSC accredited schools have made special efforts to extend offerings to unfortunate, needy, handicapped and incarcerated individuals. And, as noted previously, individuals in government and private agency rehabilitative programs often choose home study as their vehicle for retraining.

Two special NHSC accredited schools, however, concentrate all of their efforts on education for the handicapped. These are the Hadley School for the Blind (founded in 1920) and the John Tracy Clinic (founded in 1942). Both schools offer their course work tuition-free, and

both operate internationally.

The Hadley School, with eight overseas offices, serves over 7,000 students annually in braille and audio cassette courses.³⁶ They also operate an active amateur radio station to extend communication through "ham" operators.

The John Tracy Clinic provides courses for parents of preschool deaf and deaf-blind youngsters. They have served over 60,000 families since 1943 in 140 countries, with courses in English and Spanish.³⁷ Their plans include translation of their courses into other languages.

The field of distance education, therefore, has become well established in providing educational opportunity for the handicapped.

DISTANCE EDUCATION IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Distance education is a recognized and accepted practice in many countries. Whether it's elementary education in Canada or doctoral-level programs in the Soviet Union, distance education has found niches at various levels in diverse fields around the world. Home study is a regular part of "state educational systems" in various places, while often coexisting with private entrepreneurial endeavors.

Home study private enterprise in England, which continues to prosper, began in the nineteenth century, when Isaac Pitman offered shorthand by "penny post" in 1840.³⁸ The Pitman Correspondence College still exists in Wimbledon, England.

More formal offerings in United Kingdom distance education evolved circuitously, however, and seedlings which grew into bona fide home study programs ascended by default, as Marshall has noted:

As early as 1858, the University of London provided for external degrees, which "quietly dispensed with the requirement of attendance at an approved institution, and thereafter the University accepted as candidates all who presented themselves for examination, provided of course that they had passed the matriculation examination and had paid their fees."³⁹

This practice of "credit by examination" was adopted in South Africa in 1873 as the University of the Cape of Good Hope was established as an examining body for other institutions.⁴⁰ In 1946, this became the University of South Africa (UNISA), a distance teaching university.

Today, UNISA policy states that it ". . . affords equal education and employment opportunities to qualified persons regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, national origin, age,

³⁶ Edward C. Estabrooke and Hadley School Staff, "Hadley Orientation Course" (Cassette), (Winnetka: Hadley School and Estabrooke, 1984).

³⁷ Letter from Sandra Meyer to L. Valore, September, 1986.

³⁸ National Home Study Council records.

³⁹ This information, quoted by Cyril O. Houle in *The External Degree* (Jossey Bass and The Commission on Non-Traditional Study, 1973); and, by Marshall in *The Effectiveness of Home Study*, is attributed to D. Logan, *The University of London* (London: Althone Press, 1962).

⁴⁰ *Pocket Statistics, 1986* (Johannesburg: University of South Africa, n.d.).

handicap, ancestry, place of birth, marital status and domicile."⁴¹ In announcing their 1987 Distance Education Conference, Chairman F. van den Bogaerde postulates, "It is clear that in a changing and developing South Africa, education is an important part of the eventual solution. Distance Education is going to play a significant supporting role in this process."

Their 1986 enrollment figures were in excess of 85,000 students, with over 90 percent enrolled for degree programs, including nearly 500 doctoral degree candidates. Approximately 40 percent of the enrollees were black students.⁴²

And, as it emerged from English roots, UNISA could in turn be construed as the prototype for Britain's noted Open University, which was granted Parliamentary charter in 1969 for the purpose of providing liberal education for the Kingdom.

Britain's Open University was also influenced by Charles A. Wedemeyer's Articulated Instructional Media Program (AIM) experiment at the University of Wisconsin. Considered radical at its inception in 1964, the AIM Program included correspondence instruction combined with short periods of residential study as well as other unique features. Wedemeyer, who had served as a consultant for UNISA, was called upon to share ideas with founders of the U.K. institution.⁴³

The British Open University now serves over 100,000 adult learners annually, with the primary medium of instruction being study guide and correspondence assignments. Similar institutions have been set up in Spain, Israel, West Germany, Canada, Pakistan, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Thailand, Netherlands, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Japan, India and Australia.

Home study also serves in Sweden, with adult education monitored by their Ministry of Education for 300,000 students annually. And China's program of higher correspondence education includes more than 400 universities, which enroll more than 300,000 undergraduate students.⁴⁴

In the Soviet Union, there is also widespread home study activity at all levels, according to Marshall:

Of the approximately three million students involved in higher education in the Soviet Union, one and one-half million--approximately 50 percent--are correspondence students taught by the same teachers as resident students and who enjoy strong government subsidy of their educational programs. In the Soviet Union, the student may go as far as a Doctoral Degree via correspondence, as a result of the formal incorporation of correspondence study into higher education by legislative enactment.⁴⁵

Canadian elementary-level distance education began in Alberta in 1923 and in 1926 was extended by the Ontario Ministry of Education.⁴⁶ Over the years, subject offerings in grades one

⁴¹ *Pocket Statistics*, 1986.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ "Purpose and Practice of Home Study in the 1990's."

⁴⁴ *Brevsholentrednigen* (Stockholm: n.p., 1971) cited in Renee F. Erdos, *Teaching by Correspondence* (Longmans: UNESCO, 1967) and Marshall, *The Effectiveness of Home Study*.

⁴⁵ *Educational Encyclopedia* (Moscow: Academy of Science, U.S.S.R., 1970), Vol. 2, pp. 78-79, as quoted by Charles B. Marshall, *The Effectiveness of Home Study*.

⁴⁶ *Independent Learning Centre, Give Yourself Credit* (Ontario: Ontario Ministry of Education, n.d.) 84, p. 305.

through four broadened considerably, and the scope of offerings increased to include secondary and adult-level programs. Today, nine provincial secondary schools administer courses to "adults of all ages," most of whom are working toward secondary school diplomas. The Independent Learning Centre of Ontario is the largest of the provincial schools, having a current enrollment of more than 80,000 students.⁴⁷

The breadth of worldwide distance education might be better understood in realizing that the International Council for Distance Education has institutional members from more than 50 nations with every continent represented. Like the National Home Study Council and NUCEA in the United States, ICDE is continually involved in research activities, information sharing, and other activities aimed at advancing distance education. A major focus of the Council includes application of latest computer and communication technologies in the educational process, delivery systems, and curriculum and course development.⁴⁸

Finally, it should be noted that students throughout the world are enrolled in National Home Study Council member schools. NHSC member schools have administered these unofficial "foreign exchange students" since the very early days. In fact, a half-dozen or so NHSC schools have offices, divisions or departments in a multitude of foreign countries, and three NHSC members are foreign based: one in Belgium, one in Canada, and one in Singapore.

HOME STUDY EDUCATION--AGAIN THE PIONEER

Home study today is being incorporated into the concept: DISTANCE EDUCATION. Distance education, of course, is teaching/learning that occurs with the teacher distant from the learner. It goes beyond home study when it includes individuals or groups appearing at specified



Photo courtesy of International Correspondence Schools

Figure 7. Several home study courses today utilize computers and provide them as part of the course. Fields involved include electronics, programming, accounting and business management.

⁴⁷ *Independent Learning Center.*

⁴⁸ *International Council for Distance Education Bulletin*, (Manchester: Open University, North West Region, 1986) II, p 43.

times and/or locations to participate in the instruction. Examples of this include the Indiana University program, which combines home study instruction with on-site sessions in South Africa; and, a recent Deltak worldwide, live video seminar, which was beamed to an audience of more than 70,000 employees in management at a number of industrial sites. In a growing number of instances, therefore, distance education takes traditional home study out of the home. But that is as it should be, since home study has never really been constrained by place or time. This medium of learning has been practiced for years in a totally pragmatic manner, with the learner studying wherever and however possible.

Distance education today is emerging as a new and separate movement. A great deal of enthusiasm and excitement has been generated by new, independent "distance" learning schemes, due in large part to the application of modern technology/methodology. As the price of technology falls, these methods will be adapted to home study and will further enrich the learning experience for students who study at home. The most prominent methods include Telephonic Teaching and Testing, Educational Television, Video Cassette and Video Disc Lessons, and Computer Based Training.

- **Telephonic Teaching and Testing** - The telephone has been in wide use for many years in student/teacher conferencing and for a vast array of other purposes in student/school communications. Many home study schools routinely provide extended telephone service toll-free. What's new on the scene is students telecommunicating on touch-tone telephones to school computers to receive immediate test submissions and to obtain instantaneous grading and instructional assistance.
- **Educational Television** - Credit courses have long been available via public television. Today, instruction is being transmitted via Cable TV as well as by satellite to selected audiences. Corporations and government agencies also use this vehicle for instructing employees and special groups. This worldwide medium allows for student/teacher interaction.
- **Video Cassette and Video Disc Lessons** - Video cassettes are, of course, "old hat." What's new and exciting is a sophisticated form of programmed learning that results when video discs carry the lessons and are wedded to computers so that different learning sequences are presented as a direct result of each student response. Instruction on video cassettes can be either supplemental to print or carry the majority of the educational content. Systems using video discs and computer interfaces allow students random access to the instruction so that they can branch to individualized learning sequences based on their own responses. Some random technologies allow the student to interact with the system by means of a light pen, stylus, mouse, touch screen, voice, traditional keyboard or a combination of these.
- **Computer Based Training** - Teaching, testing and student/teacher conferences are all being conducted today with computers. Lessons prepared on discs are loaded by the student on personal computer or requested and accessed via telephone and modem to the student's own personal computer or terminal. Live computer-to-computer and computer-to-instructor conferencing is also possible. Instructional discs for personal computers are available today on many subjects from a variety of vendors, agencies and organizations. Interactive (computer-to-computer) communication has been introduced by some, but is still in an early phase of development. With the vast array of public and private indexes becoming available to the student who uses a computer, use of interactive communication for research and additional learning has become an exciting and cost-effective method.

All of the above methodology is "in place" today in industry, in colleges, and to a lesser extent in individual home study courses. Application in home study will broaden as the public at

large and at home equips itself with hardware and software essential to receive the new forms of independent learning. Millions of dollars are being invested each year by private companies, colleges and universities, and by governments around the world in new methods of instruction.



Photo courtesy Deltek Training Corporation

Figure 8. Computer interactive learning is "in place" in industry today. The system shown above utilizes hard discs and a monitor along with printed materials. Learning sequences can be called up via bar code, touch screen or mouse.

So, home study again is in a pioneering mode, as it strives to eliminate the time dimension, increase student/school communication, and present the most vivid and meaningful lessons possible by any method. This time around, however, the task is smoothed by the recognition and acceptance that accredited home study enjoys today. More importantly, entire nations are relying upon home study to contribute heavily in educating for social reform, providing productive work forces, and to provide learning for the sake of learning--and an enlightened public.

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